

R E M A R K S

Reconsideration of this application, as amended, is respectfully requested.

THE SPECIFICATION

The specification has been amended to correct the informalities pointed out by the Examiner. In particular, the specification has been amended at page 6, lines 15-18 to clarify that it is the polymer which has the listed absorption capability conditions. The term "schale" at page 15, line 4 has been changed to "dish" as clearly shown in Fig. 7A. The reference to the inventors at page 15, lines 8-11 has been removed. And a description of the embodiment/combination of claims 5 and 6 has been added to the detailed description.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to the specification be approved and entered, and that the objection to the disclosure be withdrawn.

THE DRAWINGS

Figs. 2 and 3 have been amended to designate the combination of the absorbent body 10 and top sheet 11 forming the absorbent core with reference numeral 3.

Fig. 4 has been amended to change the section line B-B to 5-5.

Fig. 9 has been amended to change the section line A-A to 10-10 and to include the label "Prior Art".

And Fig. 10 has been amended to include the label "Prior Art".

With respect to the features of claim 6 (which the Examiner asserted are not shown in the drawings), it is respectfully submitted that an absorbent body including a layer of pulp fiber and a mixed layer of pulp fiber and super absorbent polymer is shown in Figs. 5, 6, 8A and 8B.

In addition, with respect to the text included in Figs. 7A-C, it is respectfully submitted that such text is appropriate and permissible.

Submitted herewith are corrected sheets of formal drawing which incorporate the amendments and annotated sheets showing the changes made thereto.

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that replacement sheets of drawings be approved and entered, and that the objections to the drawings be withdrawn.

THE CLAIMS

Claim 1 has been amended to clarify that the top sheet covers the absorbent body and includes a non-woven fabric, and to recite that the absorbent article of the present invention includes a liquid-permeable upper sheet and a liquid-impermeable

lower sheet, and that the top sheet and the absorbent body are situated between the liquid-permeable upper sheet and the liquid-impermeable lower sheet.

Claim 5 has been amended to more positively recite the absorption capabilities of the super absorbent polymer of the present invention in better U.S. form.

Claim 6 has been amended to recite that the absorbent body comprises a layer of the pulp fiber and a mixed layer of the pulp fiber and the super absorbent polymer.

Claims 7 and 8 have been added to recite features of the shape of the top sheet (i.e., that the top sheet is a single sheet having an overlapping portion or is conterminous with the absorbent body), as supported by the disclosure in Figs. 2 and 5.

Claims 9-14, moreover, have been added to recite additional features relating to the outer layer non-woven fabric (element 4 in Fig. 1), and water-repellent non-woven fabrics for forming three-dimensional gathers (elements 6 and 7 in Fig. 1).

No new matter has been added, and it is respectfully requested that the amendments to the claims be approved and entered, and that the objections to the claims be withdrawn.

THE PRIOR ART REJECTIONS

Claims 1 and 4 were rejected under 35 USC 102 as being anticipated by USP 5,028,224 ("Pieper et al"); claim 1 was also

rejected under 35 USC 102 or 35 USC 103 as either being anticipated by or obvious in view of USP 4,795,452 ("Blaney et al"); claims 1 and 4 were also rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of USP 5,273,596 ("Newkirk et al"), Blaney et al and USP 4,798,603 ("Meyer et al"); and claims 1 and 4-6 were also rejected under 35 USC 103 as being obvious in view of the combination of Pieper et al, Newkirk et al and Blaney et al. These rejections, however, are respectfully traversed with respect to the claims as amended hereinabove.

According to the present invention recited in amended independent claim 1, an absorbent article is provided which comprises an absorbent body including a pulp fiber and a super absorbent polymer, a liquid-permeable top sheet including a non-woven fabric which covers the absorbent body, a liquid-permeable upper sheet and a liquid-impermeable lower sheet, wherein the top sheet and the absorbent body are situated between the liquid-permeable upper sheet and the liquid-impermeable lower sheet. In addition, according to the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1, the top sheet includes non-woven fabric. As a result, as recited in amended independent claim 1, the absorbent body can contain 55% or more of super absorbent polymer by weight - while maintaining desirable dimensional and mechanical properties of the absorbent article.

It is respectfully submitted that the prior art cited by the Examiner does not disclose, teach or suggest the above described structure of the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1.

Pieper et al discloses a diaper in which an absorbent body 240 is situated between a top sheet 230 and a back sheet 220. Hydrophilic tissue wrap 242 is also provided on at least two major, facing surfaces of the absorbent body 240. The top sheet 230 and the tissue wrap 242 of Pieper et al, however, do not have the same properties as the top sheet of the claimed present invention in that neither of them covers an absorbent body, includes non-woven fabric, and is situated between a liquid-permeable upper sheet and a liquid-impermeable lower sheet, as according to the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1.

Blaney et al discloses a diaper having multiple layers including an absorbent core 40 having an absorbent layer 46 that is enveloped by a first and a second tissue layer 48 and 50. The absorbent core 40 is situated between a top sheet 37 and a back sheet 38 which both extend beyond a side edge 42 of the absorbent core 40 to define a longitudinal edge 30 of the diaper 20. It is respectfully submitted, however, that Blaney et al also does not disclose a top sheet which covers an absorbent body, includes a non-woven fabric, and is situated between a liquid-permeable

upper sheet and a liquid-impermeable lower sheet, as according to the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1.

In addition, it is respectfully submitted that Newkirk et al and Meyer et al also do not disclose, teach or suggest this particular structural feature of the absorbent article of the present invention as recited in amended independent claim 1.

Still further, with respect to new claims 7 and 8, it is respectfully submitted that the cited references also do not disclose, teach or suggest the features recited in these claims whereby the top sheet is a single sheet having an overlapping portion or the top sheet is conterminous with the absorbent body. With this claimed structure, the absorbent polymer is prevented from moving out of the area between the liquid-permeable upper sheet and the liquid-impermeable lower sheet.

Yet still further, it is respectfully submitted that the cited references also do not disclose, teach or suggest the features of the present invention recited in new claims 9-14.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that amended independent claim 1 and claims 4-14 depending therefrom all clearly patentably distinguish over the cited references, taken singly or in any combination consistent with the respective fair teachings thereof, under 35 USC 102 as well as under 35 USC 103.

Entry of this Amendment, allowance of the claims and the passing of this application to issue are respectfully solicited.

If the Examiner has any comments, questions, objections or recommendations, the Examiner is invited to telephone the undersigned for prompt action.

Respectfully submitted,

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